



OFFICE OF MAYOR JERRY SANDERS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 1, 2007

FACT SHEET

MAYOR SANDERS ANNOUNCES IMMEDIATE BRUSH THINNING OF HIGH-RISK OPEN SPACE PARCELS

DRY CONDITIONS STATEWIDE CREATE NEED FOR CITIES, PROPERTY OWNERS TO THIN BRUSH AWAY FROM STRUCTURES

Mayor Jerry Sanders today announced a plan to immediately begin thinning City open space parcels deemed by the Fire-Rescue Department to be at the highest risk for brush fire. California is experiencing its driest conditions in 90 years, which has prompted concern from fire officials across the state about a potential increase in fire danger. Thinning the brush greatly reduces the fire hazard risk to neighboring properties and residents.

The mayor also called on property owners to be diligent in thinning brush back on their own properties to help reduce the risk of wild or canyon fires.

BACKGROUND

There are approximately 1,180 acres of City open space property that requires brush management. For more than a decade, the City has allocated funds to thin just 70 acres per year. Earlier this year during the Fiscal Year 2008 budget process, the City's Brush Management Program, overseen by the Park and Recreation Department, received an additional \$645,325 (for a total of \$1,036,412), giving the City the ability to thin approximately 210 acres in the coming fiscal year.

The City's Fire-Rescue Department has prepared a brush management priority list as part of a fire risk analysis they conducted of the City's wildland and urban interface areas. Using the list, Park and Recreation brush management staff will begin to thin the 21 City open space parcels at the top of the list in the highest risk category. These 21 parcels cover approximately 121.9 acres, and should be thinned by the end of December. Maps of the 21 highest-risk parcels are attached to this Fact Sheet.

Once these 21 parcels are thinned, brush management staff will begin to clear the parcels in the next risk level on the list.

PRIORITY ANALYSIS OF CITY'S WILDLAND/URBAN INTERFACE AREAS

A fire hazard risk analysis was conducted by the City's Fire-Rescue Department to identify high-risk fire hazard parcels within the City's wildland/urban interface areas. From this analysis, 21 highest risk parcels were identified. The City will begin thinning these parcels immediately.

- The rating system includes five factors:
 - Density of vegetation
 - Slope severity
 - Five minute response time
 - Road class
 - Proximity to fire hydrants
- Each risk factor was quantified using points. Higher points translate to higher risk which was used to generate a priority/severity list.
- This fire hazard analysis uses a cumulative score adding all five risk values.
- Areas of the city which are far from roads and fire hydrants, are brush covered, and have a steep slope will show as a high fire risk.
- The analysis addresses the potential for rapidly moving and intense fires and the ability of the SDFD to fight the fire based on quantifiable risk factors and proximity to resources.
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1144 Standard for Reducing Structure Ignition Hazards from Wildland Fire and the Wildland/Urban Interface Code-Danger Rating System were used as a basis for assigning risk values.

CREATING “DEFENSIBLE SPACE”

Defensible Space is the landscape between your house and the potential fuel source (natural brush) that it is your responsibility as a homeowner to maintain to reduce fire risk. The City’s Municipal Code* regulates brush management and creates two *Brush Management Zones* with different requirements.

ZONE 1:

Brush Management Zone 1 is typically 35 feet from the structure, on the flatter part of the property next to your house.

- ✓ Must be irrigated or watered regularly
- ✓ Must consist mostly of ornamental vegetation like lawns, low-growing shrubs, some trees, with not more than 10% native or naturalized vegetation.
- ✓ Trees and large shrubs must be pruned away from structures and roofs.
- ✓ Any wooden structures in Zones 1 and 2 (such as decks, or fences) not having a 1-hour fire resistance rating or built of combustible materials, must be removed.
- ✓ Irrigation from Zone 1 must not run onto Zone 2 (it encourages weed growth).

ZONE 2:

Brush Management Zone 2 is the remaining 65 feet from your structure, and is usually comprised of natural vegetation.

- ✓ Can have NO permanent irrigation.
- ✓ Must be *thinned and pruned* regularly to reduce vegetation by 50%, without harming native plants, soil or habitats, as described on the reverse side of this Bulletin.

NOTE: Brush management is not allowed in coastal sage scrub during the California gnatcatcher nesting season, March 1 through August 15. This small bird only lives in coastal sage scrub and is listed as a threatened species by the federal government. Any harm to this bird could result in fines and penalties.

HOW TO THIN AND PRUNE BRUSH IN ZONE 2

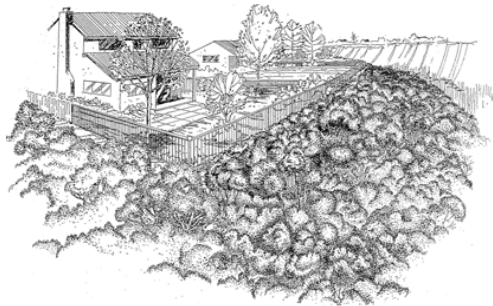
Step 1: Removeas much of the dead wood as you can.

Step 2: Prunetall vegetation like chaparral by cutting and shaping larger plants into “umbrellas.” This means pruning away the lower branches—about half--of plants over 2 feet high to create umbrella-shaped canopies. If you can, it’s a good idea to prune the lower branches of all the larger plants. This allows you to see and deal with what is growing underneath. Do not prune the tops of plants, just the lower branches. This keeps the plant healthy, and the shade from the plant canopy reduces weed and plant growth underneath. In vegetation that is less tall, like coastal sage scrub, you may not need to do Step 2.



Step 3: Thinthe entire Zone 2 area. This means cutting down no more than 50% of the plants over 2 feet high to a height of 6 inches, and may include some of the plants you pruned in Step Two. Don’t go

any lower than 6 inches so the roots remain to control soil erosion. The goal is to create a “mosaic” or more natural look, as shown below, so do your cutting in a “staggered” pattern. Leave uncut plant groupings of 400 square feet—that’s a 20 x 20-foot area, or an area that can be encircled by an 80-foot rope--separated by groupings of plants cut down to 6 inches.



Before Brush Management



After Pruning and Thinning

Step 4: Disposeof the cuttings and dead wood by either hauling it to a landfill; or, by chipping/mulching it on-site and spreading it out in the Zone 2 area to a depth of not more than 6 inches.

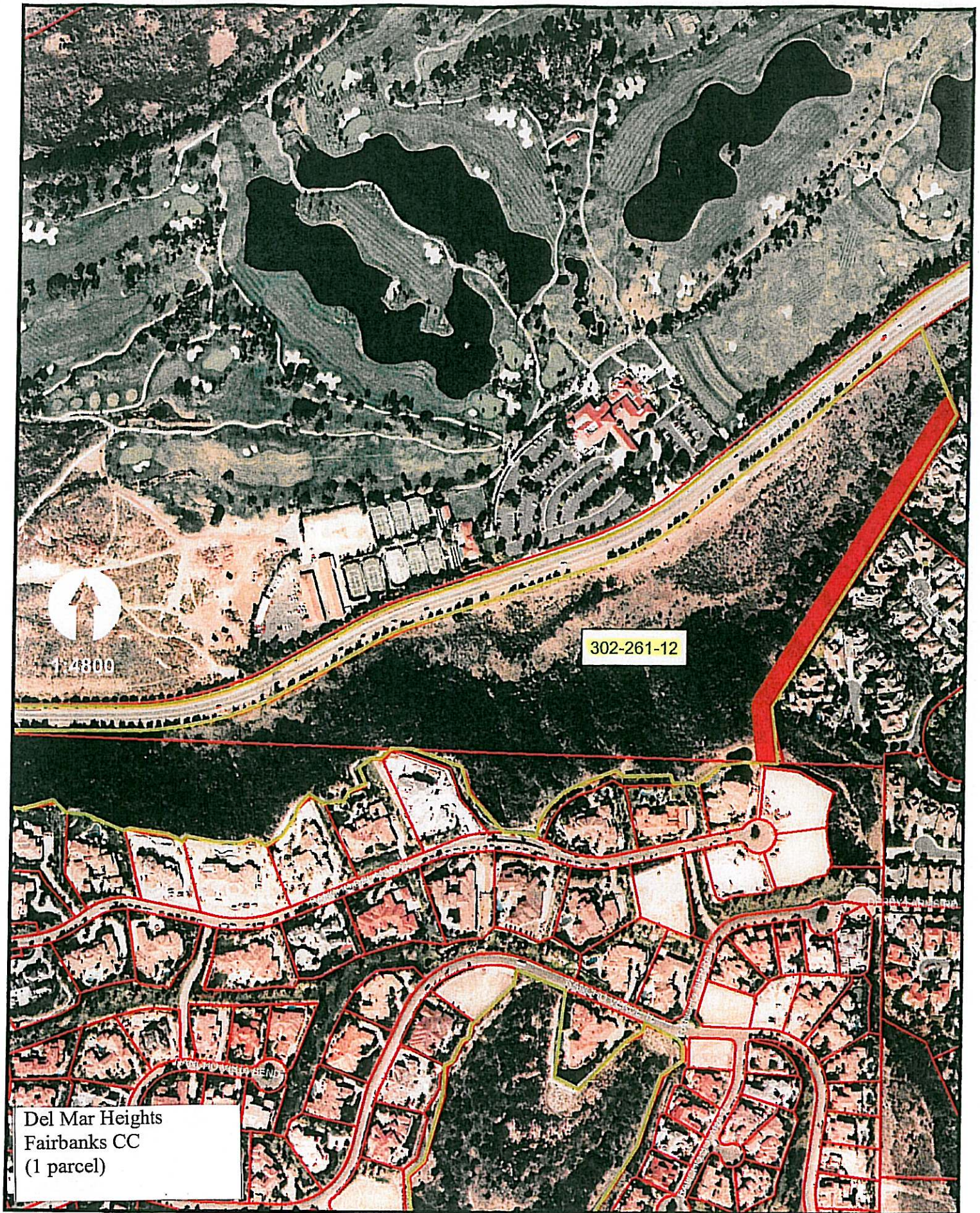
Step 5: Prune annuallybecause plants will grow back. You can also “nip it in the bud” by rubbing out the buds on plants in the spring to keep from having to prune and thin as often.

Additional Information

- Property restrictions (easements, permits, deed or title): County Recorder (619) 237-0502.
- Obtaining permits for brush management on private property with restrictions: City of San Diego Development Services Department (619) 446-5000.
- Brush Management on City-owned open space land: City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department, Brush Management Section (619) 525-8607.

**Authority: City of San Diego Municipal Code Chapter 14, Article 2, Division 4, Sections 142.0402, 142.04030, 142.0412.*

Revised 02/10/06 (San Diego Fire-Rescue)



Del Mar Heights
Fairbanks CC
(1 parcel)

302-261-12

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W. L. & S. L. San Diego County



Tierrasanta
(5 parcels)

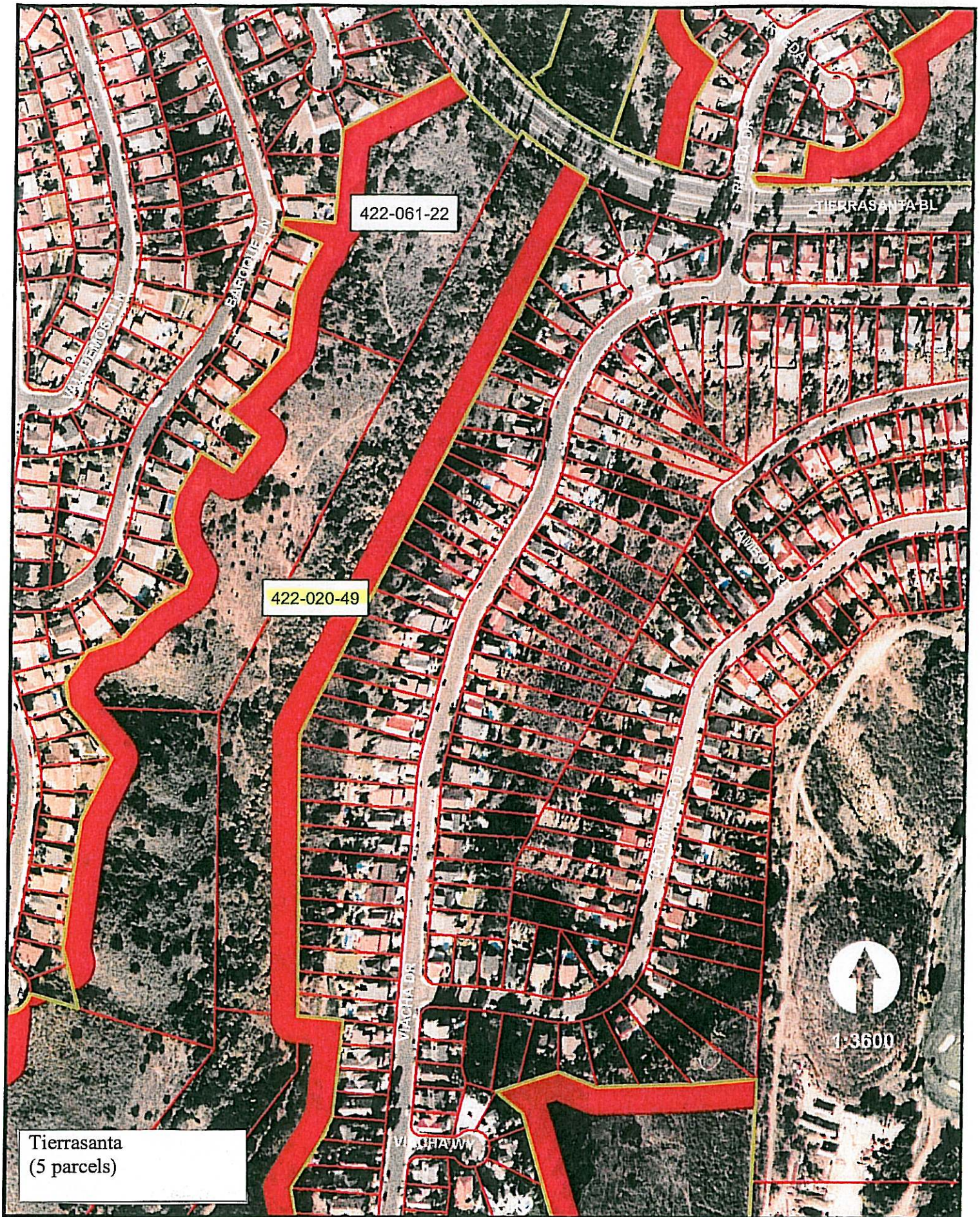
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San Diego County



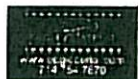
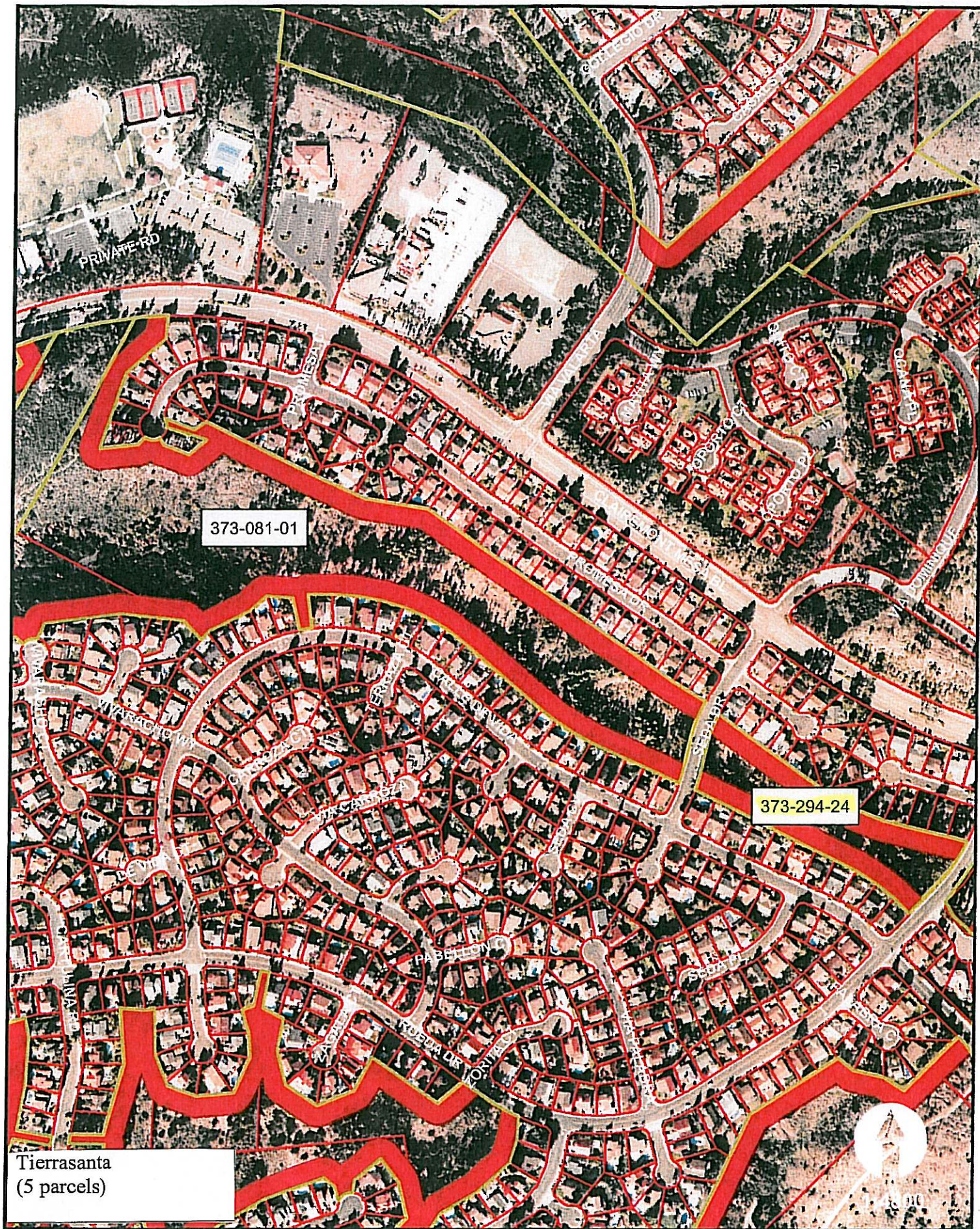
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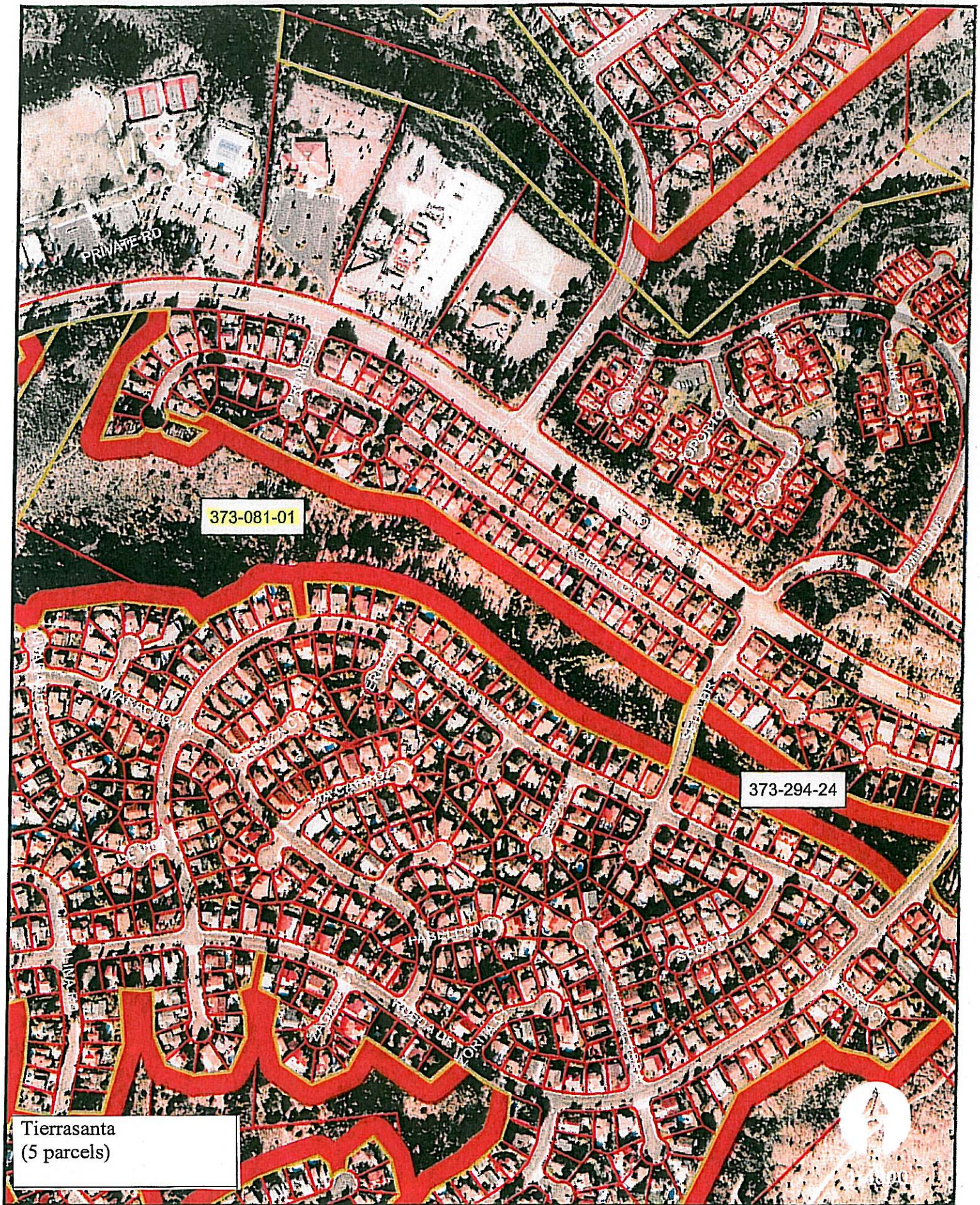
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Tierrasanta
(5 parcels)

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373-294-24

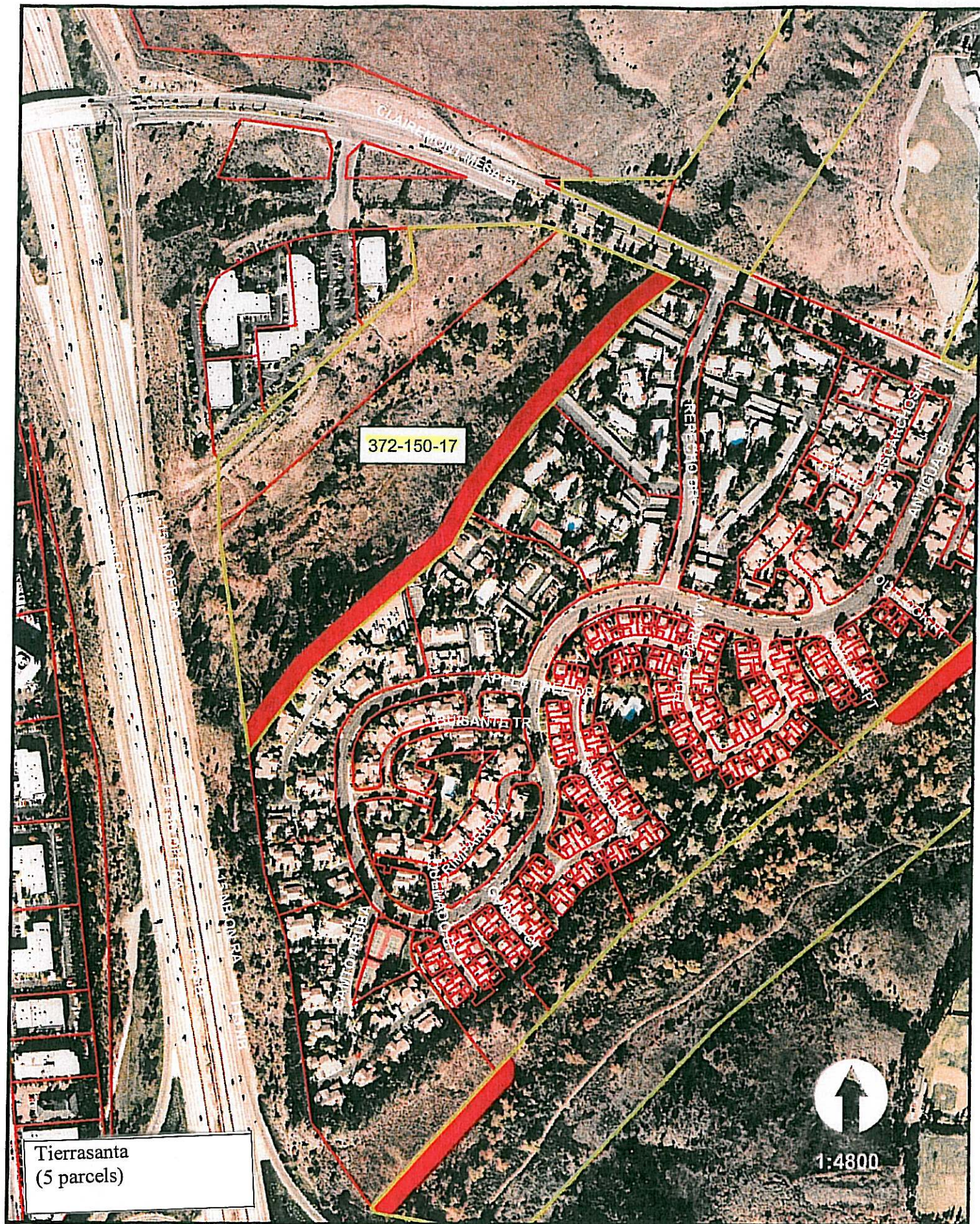
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Tierrasanta
(5 parcels)

372-150-17



1:4800

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The New San Diego County



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The New San Diego Concept



University City
(4 parcels)

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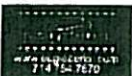
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The Best San Diego Council



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University City
(4 parcels)



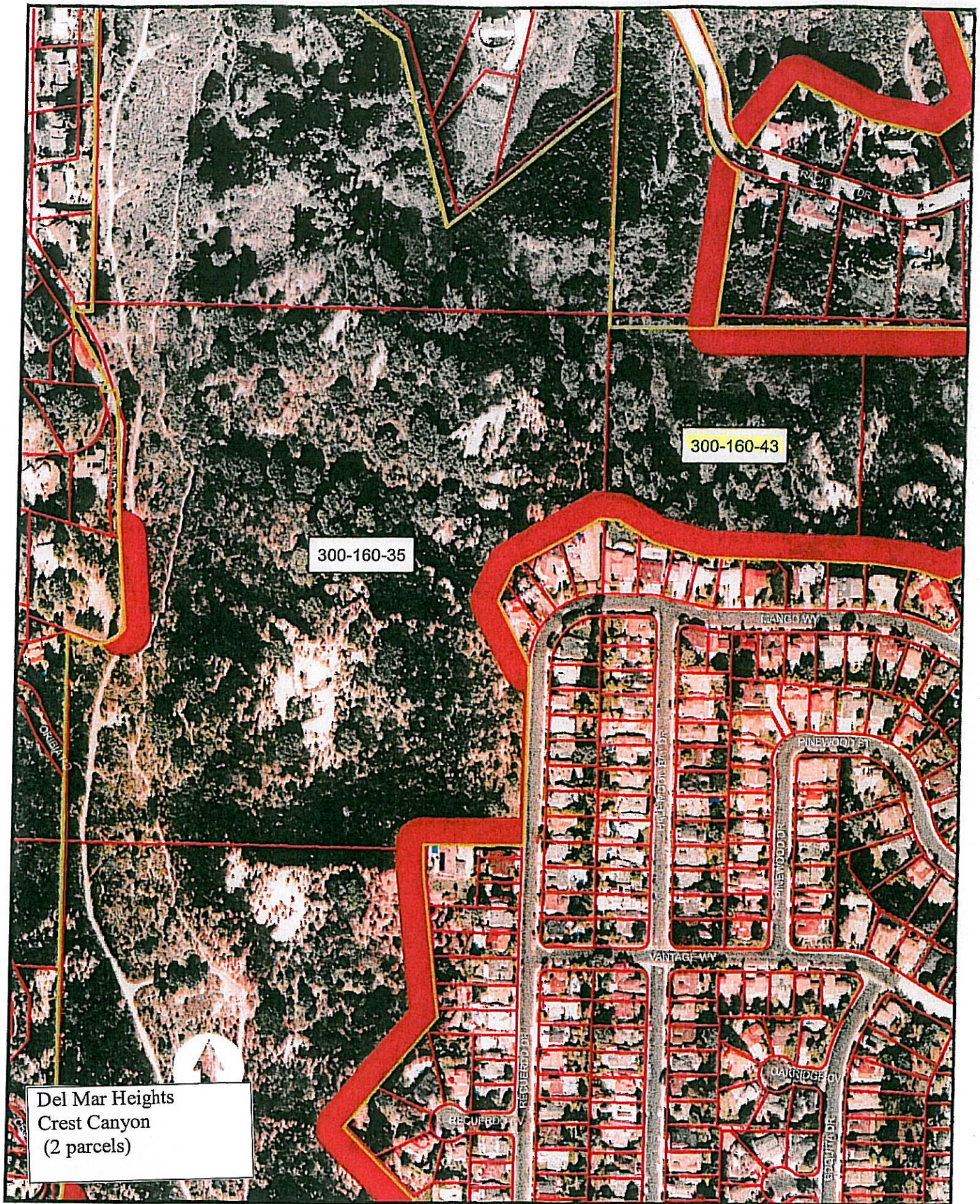
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300-160-43

300-160-35

Del Mar Heights
Crest Canyon
(2 parcels)

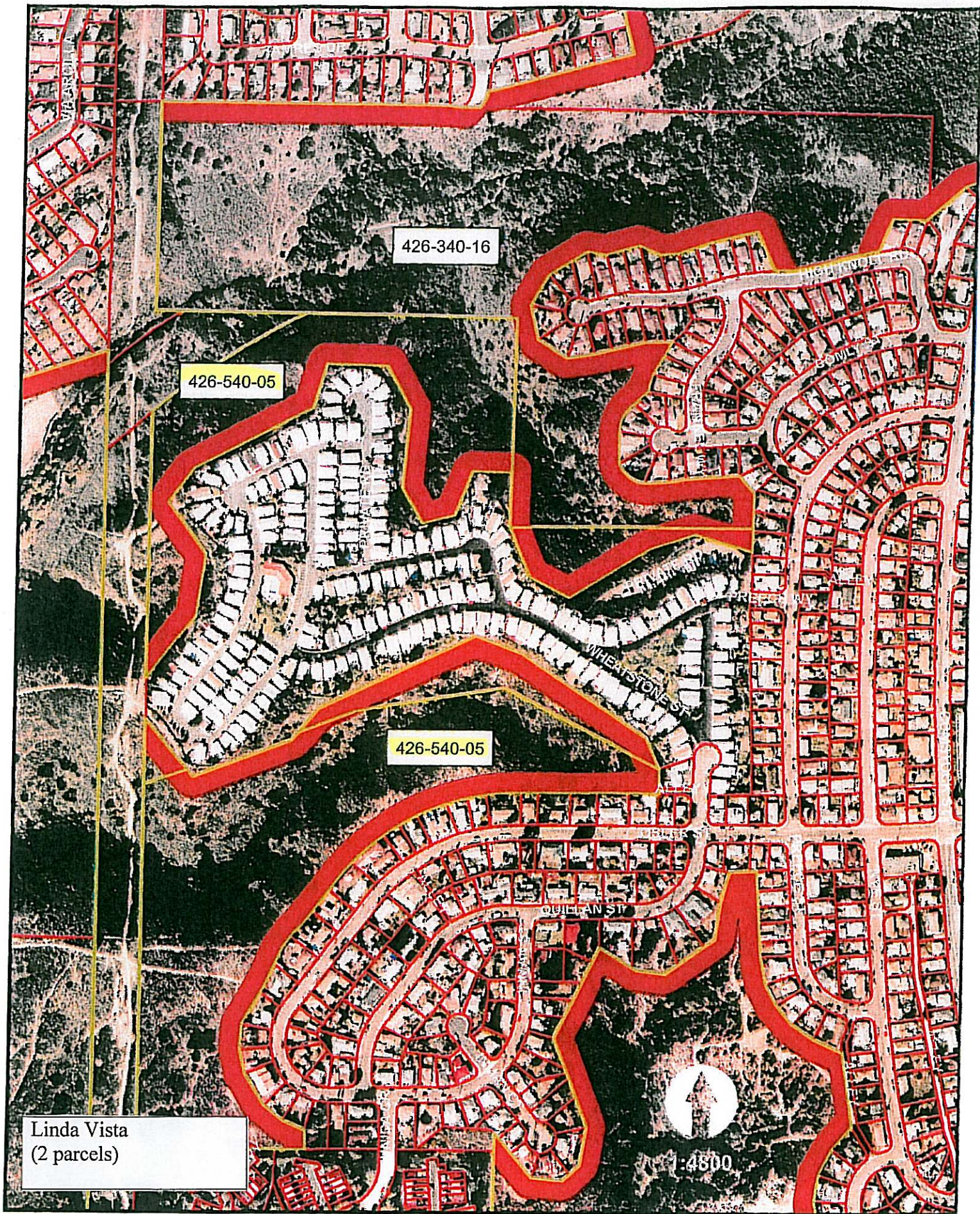
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San Diego Geographic Information System



Linda Vista
(2 parcels)

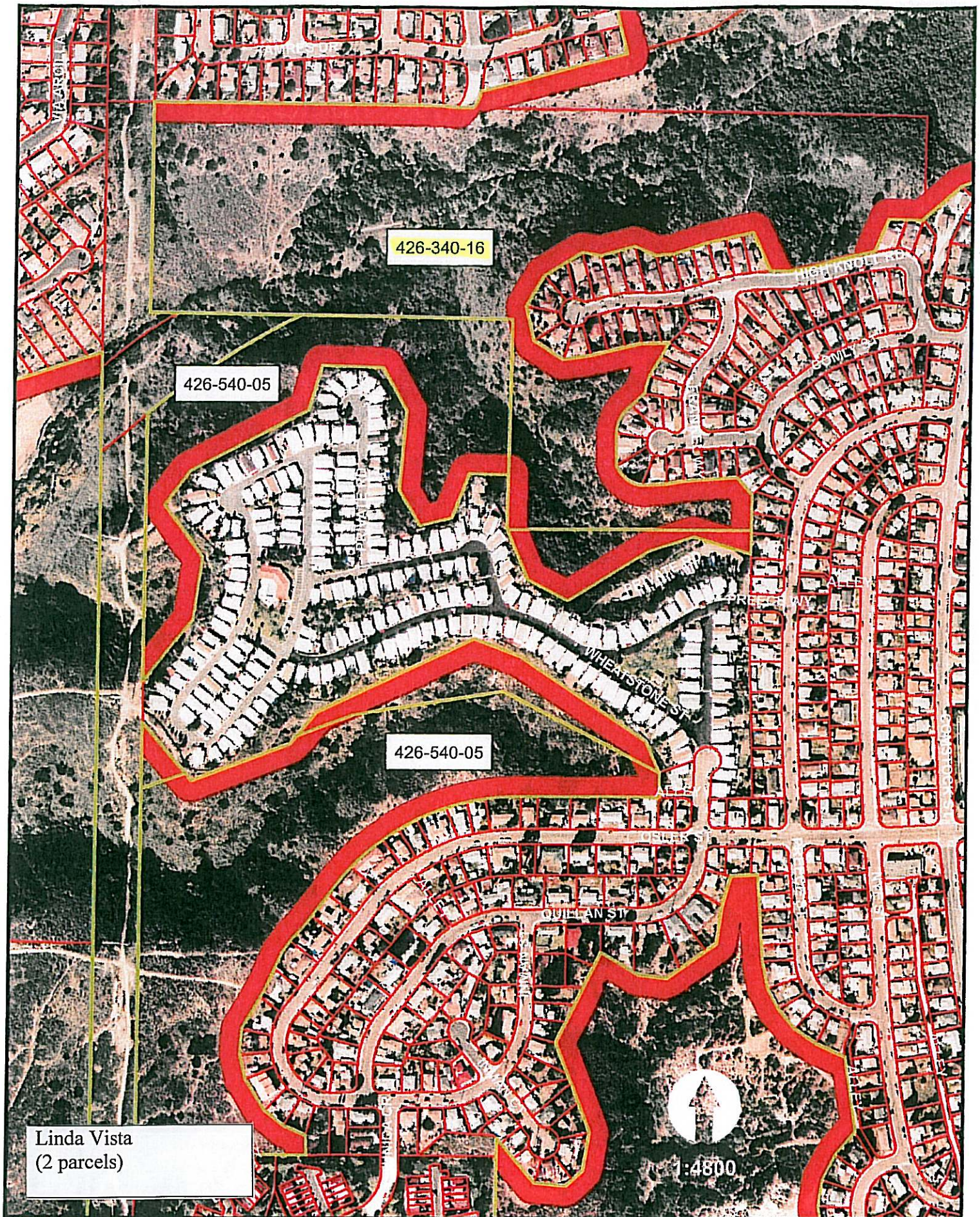
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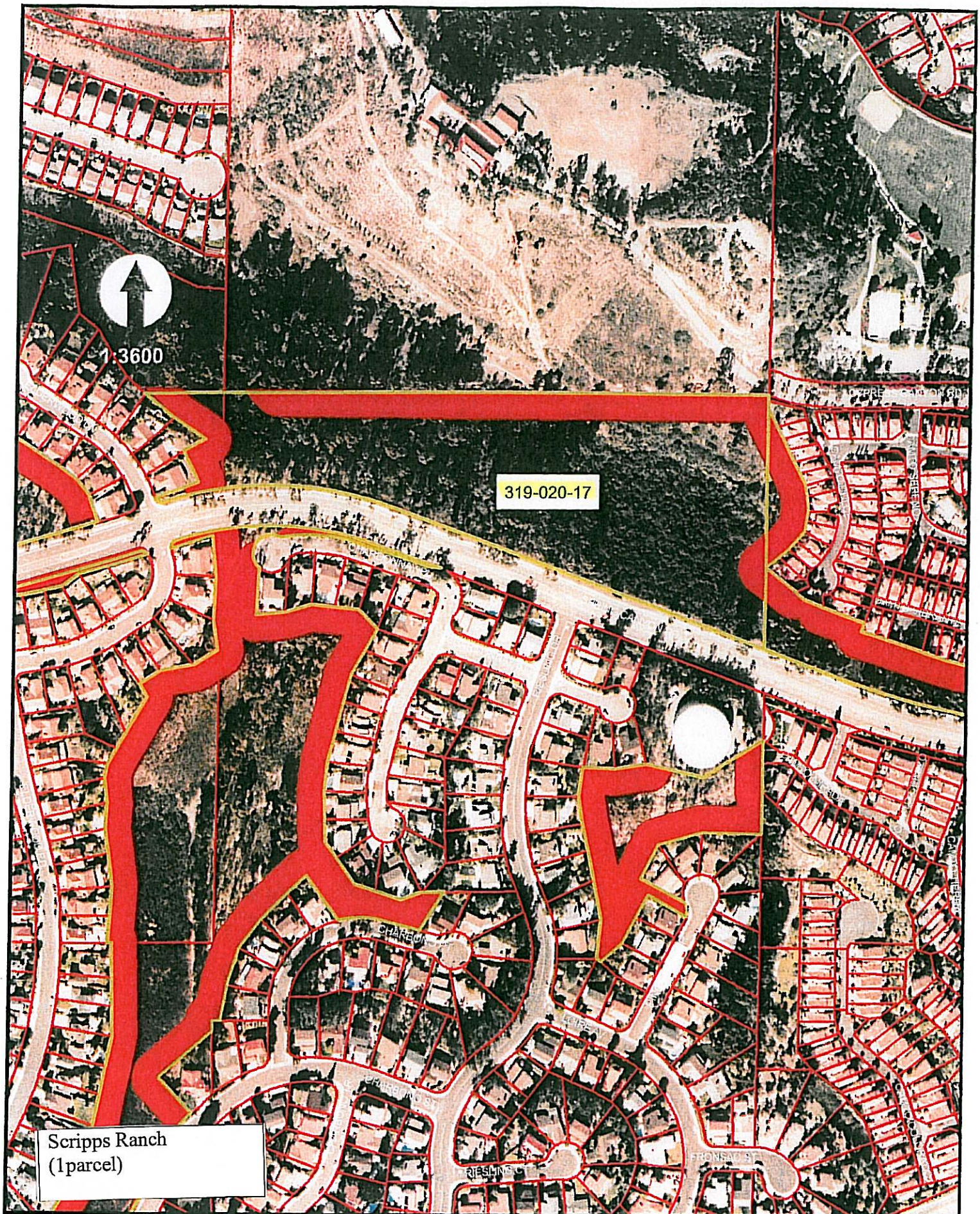
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Scripps Ranch
(1 parcel)

319-020-17

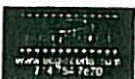
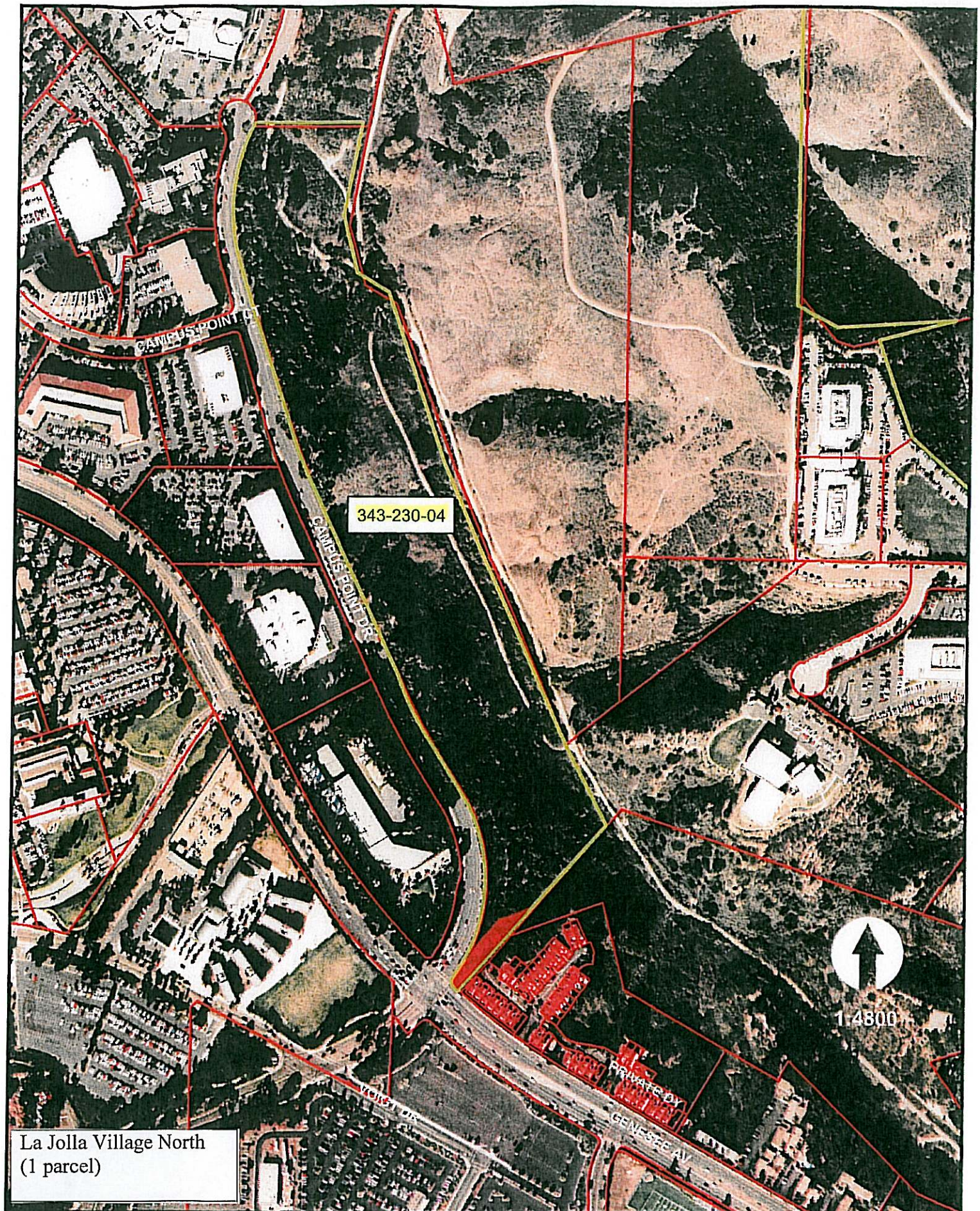
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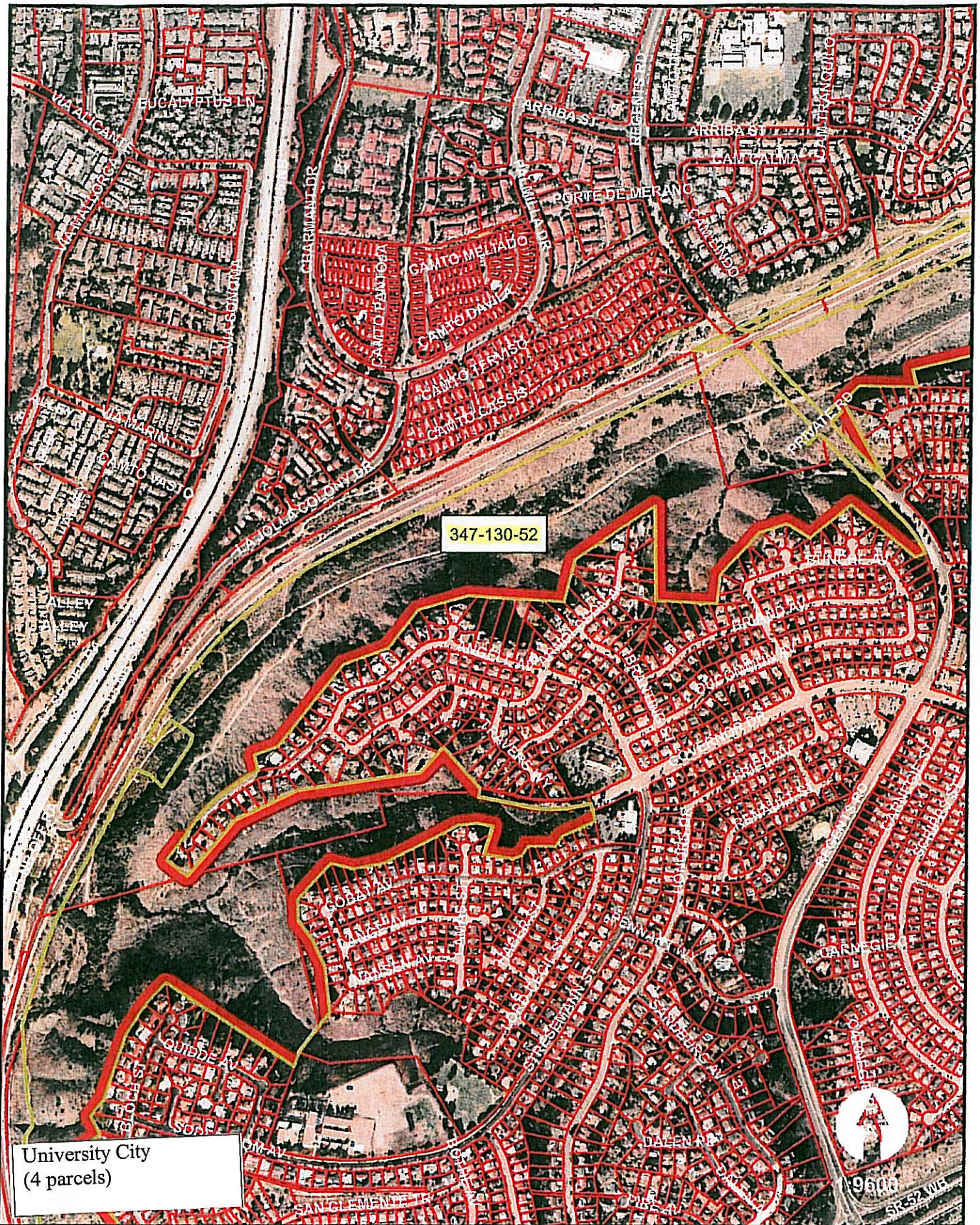
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University City
(4 parcels)

347-130-52

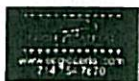
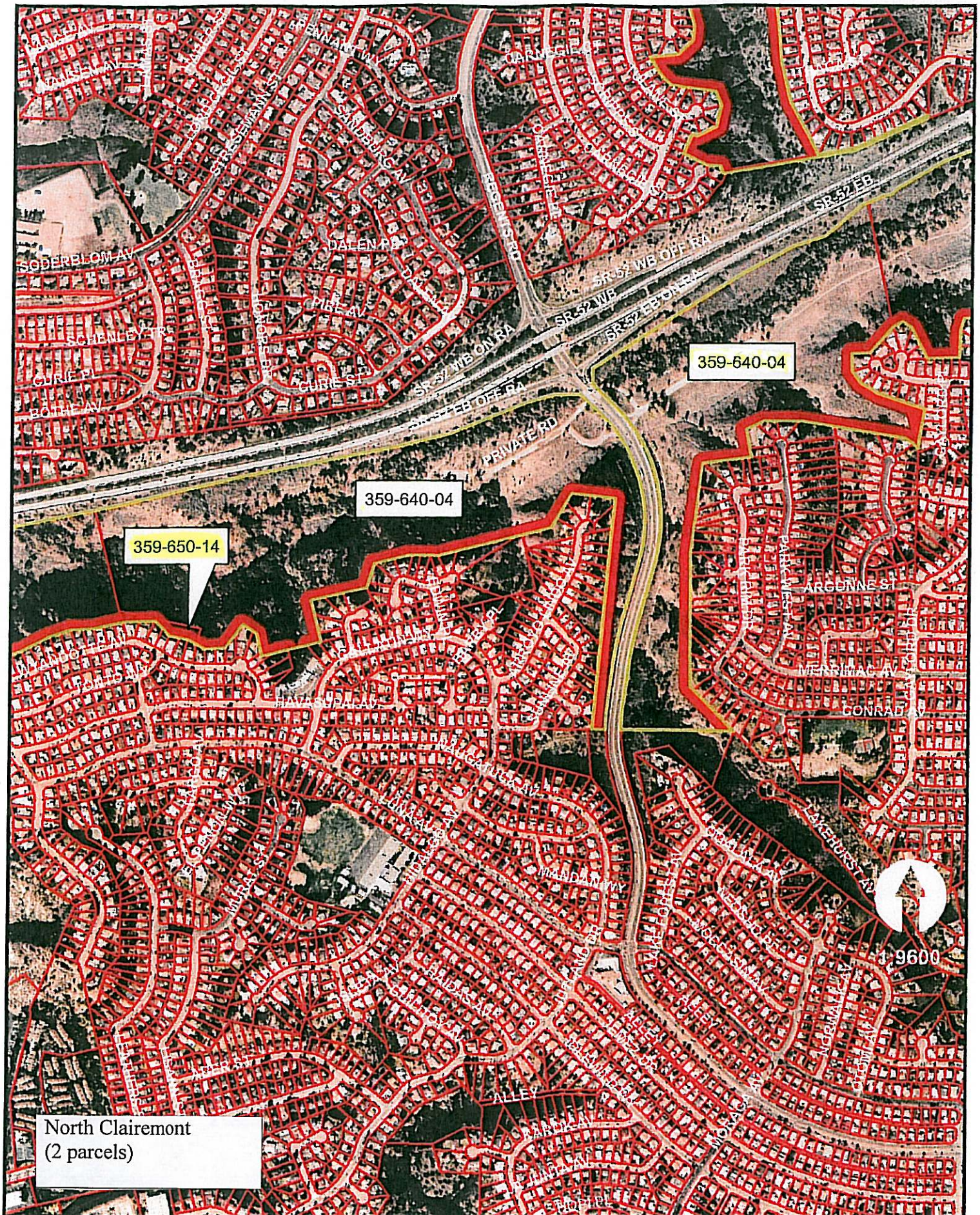


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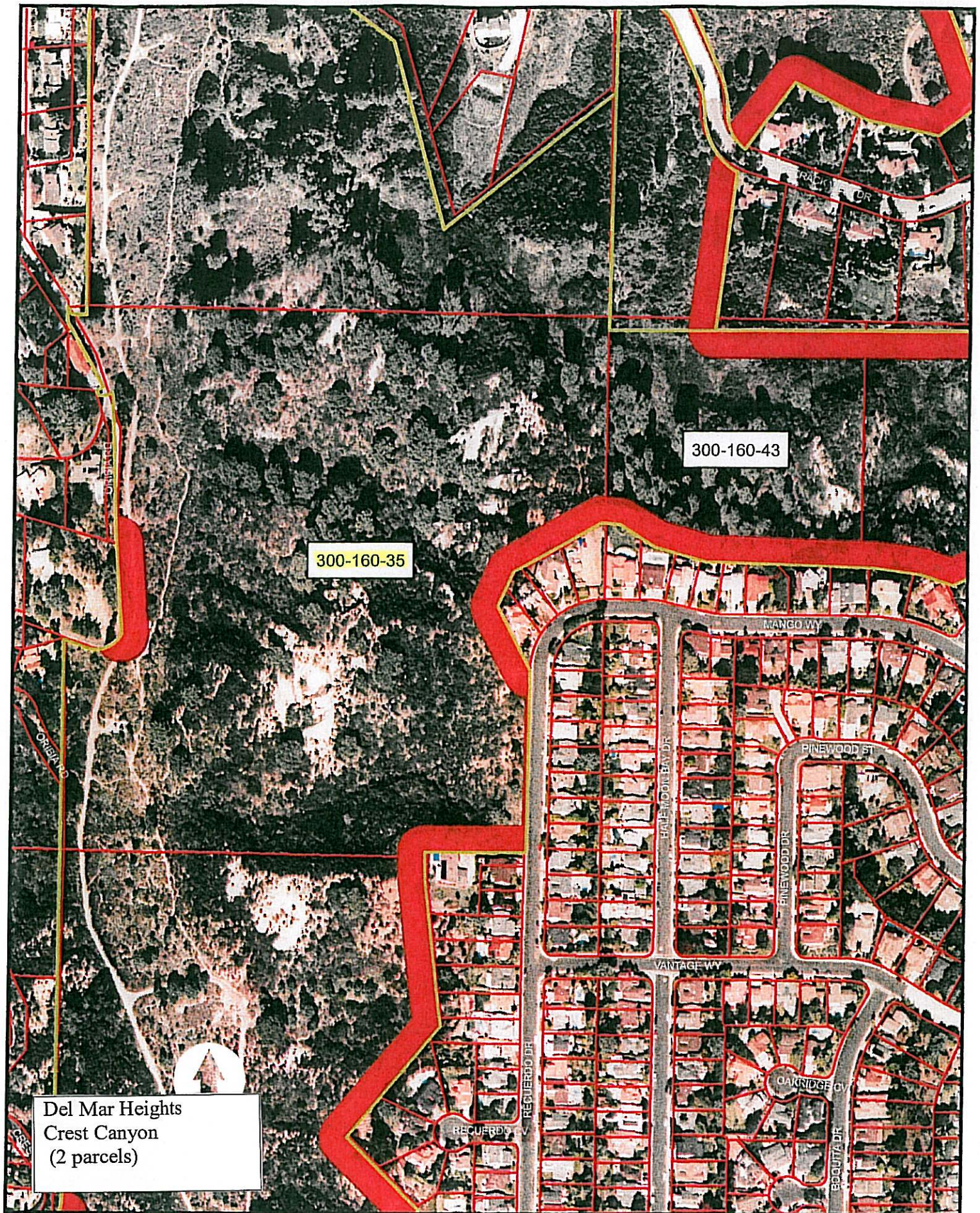
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Del Mar Heights
Crest Canyon
(2 parcels)



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